



\*\*\*For immediate release\*\*\*

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## **Senator Toby Ann Stavisky, Chair of the New York State Higher Education Committee, Condemns Newly Announced Modifications to Temporary Exemptions for Nonimmigrant Students Taking Online Classes Due to COVID-19**

“It seems clear to me that our President is using nonimmigrant students as leverage to force colleges and universities across the country to reopen their campuses, even if the institutions deem the decision pre-mature. Yesterday, the Trump Administration modified temporary exemptions for these students, forcing them to leave the country or transfer immediately, if their current school chooses a fully online educational model during this pandemic. The decision comes in the wake of Harvard and other universities announcing plans for a strictly online 2020-2021 school year.

As the Chair of the New York State Higher Education Committee, I condemn this decision. Our foreign student population is vitally important to our colleges and universities. COVID-19 has placed enough unprecedented burdens on all our students, and these new regulations put our students from abroad at an unfair, unwarranted disadvantage. Furthermore, singling out our international students may stoke more unsubstantiated fears, furthering racial and cultural divides, and possibly putting American minorities in danger here at home.

In New York, we will not cave under this pressure. We all want to see our campuses alive and bustling with activity again- and we will in due time. But until then, it is imperative that school administrations assess every situation individually, and make decisions that best represent the interests and safety of the students they serve. That is how we beat COVID-19, and that is how we get our Higher Education system back on track.”